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# RELIGION RATIONALIZED



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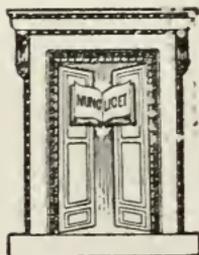
# RELIGION RATIONALIZED

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BY  
REV. HIRAM VROOMAN

VOLUME II



THE NUNC LICET PRESS  
920 NICOLLET AVE., MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

1911

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## CHAPTER I

### SOME GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND METHODS IN REASONING

IN undertaking to point out the unique divinity of Jesus Christ and the Bible, and to give the sufficient reasons for believing in some of the other general and most fundamental facts of the true Christian religion, such as immortality, heaven and hell, and man's responsibility as regards his own eternal destiny, it is necessary, at the start, that we should be clear as to certain guiding principles and methods in reasoning.

#### I

*First, the primary or basic facts underlying all knowledge, whether natural or spiritual, are*

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*simply the things which we commonly call phenomena.*

There can be no dependable superstructures of rational conclusions or beliefs without *phenomena* as their sure foundations. This being true, it is evident that we must agree upon the meaning of this large and cumbersome word if we would proceed in our thoughts together.

*The word phenomena, as employed in this book, stands for all things whatsoever which attract the attention of any man.*

A tree, for instance, which, through the sense of sight or touch, attracts the attention of a man is a phenomenon. The characteristics of a tree, such as size, shape, beauty, are likewise phenomena. The *experiences*, also, which the tree causes a man to have are phenomena, as, for instance, the experience of joy caused by the tree's beauty or grandeur, and the experience of pain

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caused by a falling limb, because they, in turn, attract his attention and register themselves in the memory.

It is important to note here that personal experiences or emotions of all kinds (which are invisible, intangible and purely spiritual) are phenomena, just as all material objects are, because they all attract a man's attention. A man not only thinks of his own thoughts and feelings, but even loves or hates them.

It should be observed, furthermore, that all phenomena are in the *now*, as to point of time, and never in the past or future. A tree, for example, is a phenomenon only while it is attracting some man's attention. It is a reality at other times, but not a phenomenon. When the man simply remembers having seen a tree, then it is *the remembrance of it*, and not the tree itself, which is the phenomenon—and the remembrance of it

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is in the "now." A tree which *was* a phenomenon is now linked or identified with consciousness by memory. It is as reliable as the memory is, but not any more so.

It is a fact that the tree is always a reality, even at times when it is not a phenomenon. We acquire the knowledge of this fact, however, by a process of reasoning. It is what we call a rational conclusion which has been reached by the proper use of phenomena as the working materials. The permanent reality of a tree, then, is an example of a *fact*, which is not a phenomenon.

It is worth while to note, in passing, furthermore, that phenomena are, at first, usually inexplicable, and, when misinterpreted, misdirect the course of reasoning. A man may not be able to give a rational explanation of the things which he sees, hears, feels, smells, tastes *or experiences*,

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and his reasonings about these phenomena may be mostly misdirected; but, nevertheless, the phenomena themselves, which have attracted his attention, are always indisputable facts. And they are, nevertheless, and necessarily, the basic facts of all superstructures of correct reasoning. A clear line of discrimination must always be made between these primary facts which are phenomena and all other facts or rational conclusions gained by means of them. Upon this rock many theologies or religious doctrines founder. A notable instance of failure in making this discrimination is to be found in those religious writings which deny the phenomena named matter, evil, suffering and the like. Such advocates deny what they know and assert what they conjecture.

If the reader is tempted to dispute the definition of phenomena as given here he

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should, nevertheless, see and hold in mind the definite and distinct class of facts, which, as distinguished from all other classes of facts, is allowed here to be represented by the word phenomena. In this volume the word phenomena is made to stand for those primary or basic facts which, as stated, are the sure foundations of all rational conclusions. Therefore, this group of facts is to occupy an important place in the discussions which follow. No attempt is made to lay any particular stress upon the word except as it stands for this particular class of facts.

## II

Secondly, if the particular class of facts which we call phenomena is now recognized so as to be distinguished from all other classes or kinds of facts, and if it is seen that these are the primary or basic facts

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underlying all knowledge, then the way is prepared for a most significant observation pertaining to the correct method of proving spiritual verities.

Phenomena, as representing a distinct class of facts, are themselves to be divided into three subdivisions because each of them will be seen to fill a distinctive function in the realm of man's rationality. The first subdivision of phenomena will be seen to supply the primary or basic facts for all scientific reasoning, and the other two subdivisions to supply the primary or basic facts for *false and true spiritual reasonings, respectively*. This statement, if true, is of momentous significance. Most careful attention, therefore, is called for upon this point.

It has already been shown that every human experience is a phenomenon. It is known, furthermore, that every human ex-

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perience is characterized by either selfishness or unselfishness as to its quality. This was shown in different parts of Volume I and will be further exemplified in this volume. Now, *the selfishness or unselfishness of any human experience, whichever it may be, is itself a phenomenon.* If a man experiences some emotion, and if that emotion is essentially unselfish in its quality, it is evident that the unselfish emotion is, *to him*, a phenomenon. And similarly a selfish emotion is, *to him who experiences it*, a phenomenon.

With these preliminary observations we are ready to define the three subdivisions of phenomena which fill three distinctive functions in the realm of a man's rationality.

First come those phenomena which are characterized by neither selfishness nor unselfishness and which pertain strictly to the knowledge of the things of this material

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universe, and of man's relation to the universe. The phenomena of this subdivision serve as the basic or primary facts for all scientific reasoning. They include, for illustration, all the purely material facts concerning such natural objects as animals, vegetables, minerals, as well as mathematical relations, time, space and the like.

Secondly come the phenomena of human experience which can be characterized as selfish. These may be illustrated by such facts as hatred, revenge, perverted friendship, egotistical benevolence and the like. *It is the peculiar function of the phenomena of this subdivision to serve as the basic or primary facts in all false reasoning pertaining to God and the things that are spiritual.* The Lord referred indirectly to the function of the phenomena of this second subdivision when he said, "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light,

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lest his deeds should be reproved." (John 3 : 20.)

Thirdly come the phenomena of human experience which can be characterized as unselfish. These may be illustrated by such facts as mercy, humility, innocence, kindness, justice, love to God, love to the neighbor and the like. *The phenomena of this subdivision serve as the primary or basic facts (which indeed are the chief working materials at the command of the faculty of rationality) in reasoning out any true spiritual conclusion or in perceiving the truth of any spiritual revelation.*

Christ referred indirectly to the function of the phenomena of this third subdivision when he said, "He that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." (John 3 : 21.) Indirect reference is made to the same thing where the Lord declared,

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“If any man will do His (the Father’s) will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.” (John 7 : 17.) When Christ spoke to the disciples about “following” Him, it is known that He meant for them to follow Him in unselfishness of life. And so the function of this third subdivision is again alluded to where He says, “He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.” The same fact is involved in Christ’s statement to Nicodemus, “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Among other things this means that except a man experience those unselfish purposes and emotions involved in the rebirth which are unselfish phenomena he cannot see many of the chief truths of religion. “And ye *will not* come to Me that ye might have life.” (John 5 : 40.) This refers to that selfish quality

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of the will which determines the essential selfishness of a man's whole disposition. This deprives him of the knowledge of truth and of spiritual life. "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes, even so Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." (Mat. 11 : 25, 26.) The babes here are those who are in states of innocence which are states of unselfishness. These states count more than all the wisdom of the world as a basis for the knowledge of spiritual verities.\*

\* Says Coleridge—Literary Remains, III, 159: "The true Lutheran doctrine is that neither will truth as a mere conviction of the understanding save, nor error condemn. To love truth sincerely is spiritually to have truth; and an error becomes a personal error not by aberration from logic or history, but so far as the causes of such error are in the heart, or may be traced back to some antecedent unchristian wish or habit."

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It is to be shown in succeeding chapters, in those particularly in which the unique divinity of the Bible is to be set forth, that the divine revelations of the Bible are, in their essential nature, spiritual light by which men are enabled to see the selfishness and unselfishness in the phenomena of the second and third subdivisions of phenomena above described, so as to distinguish between them in their striking contrasts of opposition. Thus the light of revelation, as will be shown, enables the faculty of rationality to make use of the phenomena of this third subdivision in working out, so as actually to perceive, the problems of spiritual truth. But with men who have an insufficient supply of the "unselfish phenomena" the light of revelation is as twilight or as darkness. It is as dark as a text-book in geometry to a boy who does not yet know how to add and subtract, and for analogous reasons. Thus

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it will be shown in considerable detail that spiritual knowledge is first of all dependent upon unselfish quality in character.

### III

*Thirdly, as between the relative value, as evidence, of phenomena and all historical claims, the preference invariably must be given to phenomena.*

The difference between phenomena and the rational conclusions deduced from them was shown in part one of this chapter. It is nearly as important, in religious reasoning particularly, to observe the difference between phenomena and supposed facts which rest their proof wholly upon tradition and the records of written history.

We can never be *certain* of the facts which written histories presume to reveal *unless* these facts are vouched for or verified by phenomena. All religious dogmas, there-

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fore, which rest alone upon alleged facts taken from history, and which have no other proof, are unreliable, in the sense of not being demonstrably true. They may, in many instances, be most useful in the absence of more trustworthy knowledge, but this usefulness can not make us as certain of these supposed facts as we are of our demonstrable knowledge. Of purely historical evidence no one dare say he is *sure*. Certainly it should never be allowed to override the evidences of actual phenomena.

This method of testing the reliability of historical facts by submitting them to the test of a careful comparison with known phenomena may be illustrated by analogy. We need only to note the method of the geologist in proving the certainty of many important and even startling facts pertaining to the conditions of the earth thousands of

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years ago. Bear it in mind that the *historical* facts which the geologist knows are *not* phenomena. For example, geology declares that certain gravel beds which now lie high and dry upon the tops of hills, mark the courses of rivers which flowed over them thousands of years ago. In arriving at this sure conclusion phenomena have been employed, somewhat as words are usually employed in written histories,—that is, arranged in such an order as to produce the statement, as it were, of a historical fact which can be seen to be true.

For example, the geologist observes gravel on the top of a hill. This is a phenomenon. He knows the fact, but is not as yet able to tell how or when it came there. He next observes gravel on the tops of other hills and on the sides of hills, and sometimes covering broad areas and sometimes follow-

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ing narrow and winding courses. Still he can arrive at no conclusion, but continues to observe other phenomena and to make note of them. Further observation shows that gravel is, at the present time, being formed by the action of running water and water waves. These facts begin now to be suggestive. In continuing his observations he finds that some parts of the earth's surface are now slowly rising while other parts are sinking. Enhanced erosion consequent upon uplift, and redistribution of erosion channels through faulting or obstructing, lead frequently to the excavation of new valleys, and leave the older gravel deposits stranded at higher levels. By and by, his accumulations of observable facts or phenomena are so numerous, and they fall into such an order of arrangement before his perceptive or rational faculties, as to become as evidence more than equiva-

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lent to the testimony of written history. With the authority of a real criterion of truth they declare that, thousands of years ago, rivers flowed over some of the gravel beds which are now resting upon these hill tops, while others were once sea-beaches.

It is, of course, true that only a small portion of the contents of written histories can be verified by phenomena as can the facts of geology. There are some, however, which can be so verified. And some small parts of most histories can be so verified. *It will be shown in succeeding chapters that the spiritual revelations in the Bible can be so verified*, and that when so verified spiritual truth becomes a matter of demonstrated knowledge in contradistinction to "faith" as commonly defined. And thus the criterion of truth described in Volume I will be seen to be identified with the correct interpretations of Scripture.

## CHAPTER II

### THE POSSIBILITY OF GOD'S INCARNATION IN JESUS CHRIST PROVED

MANY persons profess belief in a personal God who deny the possibility of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. They falsely claim that the incarnation would be equivalent to the reduction of the Infinite to the finite. They assert this as one *all-sufficient* reason for denying Christ's unique Divinity. This, of course, we all know, would be an impossibility. We know that God did not become finite when he became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Logically this would be equivalent to the annihilation of the Infinite.

Before treating of the *actuality* of the

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incarnation in later chapters it is in order first to prove its *possibility*. In doing this some other foundations will be laid at the same time, as will be seen.

In proving the possibility of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ we will begin with a simple fact which has been well enough tested and demonstrated to cause all scientists to believe it. It is the simple fact that *all things are related*. This fact ranks so high in the aristocracy of facts as to be called a principle. It is not a phenomenon, but is a universally acknowledged principle deduced from almost countless phenomena.

First of all, let us be clear as to what relationship means. Relationship means that one thing affects the other thing so that each is different from what it would be without the other. It means that if any speck of dust should suddenly become

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annihilated, a change of some kind would take place in every object of the universe.

It follows as an inevitable conclusion that God is related to Nature and that Nature is related to God. This is so for the sufficient reason that all things are related. God is not only related to Nature, but to *every one* of the infinite number of finite things in Nature. And this relationship means, as pointed out, that God and finite things are reciprocally affected. This relationship between the infinite God, on the one hand, and every created finite reality, on the other, is a key for our unlocking the possibility of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ.

We all understand the importance of using the proper methods in the attainment of any result. Method is as necessary in thinking as in working with the hands. As to method, one of the chief ones employed by scientists in discovering new facts, or in

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discovering new relationships, which is the same thing, is to look for the effects which one thing produces upon or in another thing as the natural expression or result of its relation to it. For illustration, the way one becomes aware of cold weather is, first of all, by feeling its effects in his body. The chemist becomes aware of certain relations when the effect of explosion is produced by certain substances coming into contact. *And this is the method by which we learn definite and concrete things about God.* We gain definite and concrete knowledge of God by observing some of the effects which God is producing in our individual lives, and in the different things of the world. A man may know in a definite and positive way as much about God as he can learn of the effects which God produces in finite things as the result of His relationship to them.

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One of the "stock arguments" of the agnostic is something like this: Inasmuch as the finite mind of man cannot, in the nature of things, comprehend the Infinite, therefore, men cannot know God. It is true that the finite cannot comprehend the Infinite, but the finite can and does comprehend many of the finite effects which the infinite One produces in Nature and in Human-nature.

It happens that there are secrets hidden even within a grain of sand which are as utterly beyond the powers of any scientist to find out as those which are hidden in God's Infinity. The things which any scientist may learn about a grain of sand are not so many as a millionth of what it holds in secret. Before denying that we can know anything about God, because of so many things in Him that are beyond our comprehension, let us consider for a

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moment the things which are beyond our comprehension in a grain of sand.

Any grain of sand, so science declares, is related to every other object in the universe. This means that a grain of sand affects, by some form of action, every other object whatsoever, and, in return, is affected by that other object. Furthermore, a grain of sand is largely the product of what has been contributed to it, as from cause to effect, by every one of the innumerable activities of all the other objects of the universe during the interminable millenniums of the past: and thus it may be truthfully stated that the secrets hidden within one grain of sand, if revealed, would lay bare the universe. Furthermore, a grain of sand is one of the constantly contributing causes helping to determine what every object and every activity of this world and all solar systems are yet to be

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throughout all coming time. But notwithstanding this incomprehensible phase of the grain of sand, we are sure of such knowledge as we have pertaining to it. We have observed some few effects which the grain of sand produces and these are all that we know about it. Precisely the same thing is true of our knowledge of God. We are observers of certain effects which God produces in finite things and from these we gain our knowledge of God. *How* it is that we observe these effects produced by God will be shown in later chapters.

We have heard frequently the expression that God abides in human hearts. It is a very common expression. What does it mean? It is usually thought of in a mystical way and is, many times, misleading. We are now ready to see what it means and to think of its meaning in clear and definite terms. By God's abiding in human hearts

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means simply that He is producing effects there. And he not only abides in human hearts but, as literally, abides in everything which He has created of the mineral kingdom as well as of the animal kingdom. He abides in everything, even the most infinitesimal, by way of producing effects in it.

But it has already been observed that the grain of sand itself, by virtue of its relation to everything else in the universe, produces effects in every other thing. Does it follow, then, that the grain of sand abides in every other thing in the same sense that God abides in things other than Himself? It does. The only difference between God's abiding in everything other than Himself and the grain of sand's abiding in everything other than itself is the difference between the effects which they respectively produce. We say that God abides in the human soul.

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And so does the grain of sand. Both the grain of sand and the human soul have existence and, therefore, they are related and, therefore, they produce effects in each other and, therefore, they abide in each other. But, the important thing to be noted is this: The effects which God produces in the human soul are vastly different from the effects which the grain of sand produces therein.

And as said, God abides in the grain of sand as literally as He abides in the human soul: but the effects which He produces in the one differ from those which He produces in the other. Hence, one thing's abiding in another means simply and precisely that the one thing is affecting the other.

If one should attempt to write down all that one could learn about the effects produced by the solar sun in the vegetable kingdom of the world, he would be confront-

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ing an endless task. The sun abides most marvelously in every flower, in every grain of corn, in every tree, by the effects which it produces therein. And it is in a similar way that God abides in Nature, including the solar sun itself.

From these observations, it becomes strikingly manifest that God's abiding in a man does not make man God. The fact of man's distinctiveness from God, the fact that man is in no sense Divine, cannot be taken to heart too seriously by this generation for the reason that one of the most subtle and most pernicious and most malignant and most widely permeating perversions of truth in the world to-day is the assertion that man is himself Divine. The so-called "new theology" and "new thought movement" and the so-called "religious liberalism" of the present time are all permeated with this unreasonable and illogi-

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cal and ridiculous assertion of man's Divinity and of man's identity with Deity.

It would be nearer the truth to say that a grain of sand on this planet is a part of the pure fire of the sun than to say that a man is a part of God. The sun abides in a grain of sand, but the grain of sand is not for that reason the sun, neither is it any part of its pure fire.

Is it not a fact that there is a difference between any two things? a difference by which the one thing is distinguished from the other? Are any two things in all the universe precisely the same? Manifestly, no. Hence, is there not a difference of some kind between the eternally self-existent Life and any one of the finite forms of life which has been created by It? The self-existent Being is, as to Himself, a Unit. The infinite One abides in His own unique state of Being with divine Love and infinite Wisdom and

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omnipotent Power. The word "Divine" stands for the distinction between the quality of God's love and that of any finite person's love. It represents God's own distinctive and absolutely unique quality of love—His own unique state of being. This is the only correct meaning of the word as it is to be used in religious or spiritual discourse. Persons who are claiming Divinity for themselves and who are identifying themselves with the Infinite, are playing with a most dangerous fire of spiritual egotism. If it were not for a partially redeeming innocence of ignorance which usually accompanies it, this claim would be blasphemous presumption.

It is vital to the logic of our thought in this connection to observe that the difference between any two things does not cause those two things to be separated. Two things are different even when they are

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visibly connected. Every one will observe a difference between his right and left arms even though they are visibly connected. And, as stated before, there is an invisible connection of relationship even between the two most distantly separated molecules of matter in the universe. *There is no such thing as absolute separation of two objects, but there is invariably some difference between them.* Hence, although there is so great a difference between a finite man and God that the highest flights of the imagination can bring us relatively not so near to comprehending it as the flights of a bird bring it close to the sun, yet we are not separated from God, but, on the contrary, closely and vitally and intimately connected with Him by various ties of tender relationship, many of which He has revealed, as will be shown, in His written Word.

In thinking of any finite thing in Nature

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we are compelled to observe its limitations. If we think again of the grain of sand, we note that its limitations are such as to preclude its ever becoming a solar sun. Hence, by God's abiding in the grain of sand, as has been pointed out, He does not thereby cause the grain of sand to become infinite or to do anything for which it is disqualified by its finite limitations. The infinite God, by abiding in finite things, *causes them to do only limited things.*

We have stated that God abides in Nature, that He abides in the solar sun as literally as He abides in the human soul: likewise that He abides in the grain of sand and in every other finite object of the universe. By the infinite and unlimited One's abiding in the solar sun and in the grain of sand and in each one of the other infinite number of finite and limited things of Nature, what happens? It may be stated quite simply.

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The solar sun is thereby made to fill its function. Every object in Nature, with the one single exception of man, is thereby forced to fill its function. Neither the solar sun nor the grain of sand nor anything else is made to do one iota more than to fill its function. With man it is somewhat different, because *he is made responsible* for some of the things involved in his filling his function.

It will be important now to observe that the function of the sun and that of the grain of sand and that of any other finite thing all differ. No two finite objects in all the universe fill precisely the same function. And each finite object, from a speck of dust to a solar sun, is enabled to fill its function and even compelled to do so, solely from the fact of God's abiding in it. In other words, the effects which God produces in every object of Nature, or the

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effects produced by God's abiding in that object, are equivalent to that object's filling its function.

In the light of the foregoing observations the *possibility* of the Incarnation will now soon be apparent.

It has been shown how God abides in every finite thing, and what happens to it by His abiding in it. It is now to be observed that God abode in the finite part of Jesus Christ, which was inherited from the virgin mother Mary, in just the same sense that He abides in a grain of sand and in any finite man.

*But now pause.* What were the effects produced in the finite part of Jesus Christ, and, through it, in the spiritual universe, by God's abiding in it? *These effects become the evidence in showing who Jesus Christ was.* In later chapters some of these effects will be brought to light. In describing these

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effects the *function* of the finite part of Jesus Christ will be shown. In brief, it will be shown that the function of the finite part of Jesus Christ was to enable God Almighty to be personally present within a man's finite limitations. Jesus Christ filled the function of acting the part of the infinite Being within a man's finite limitations. That this is a *fact* is, of course, yet to be shown; but that it is a *possibility* is now manifest and rationally established.

God does things for men or affects men, which is the same, in many ways and by different methods and with as many instrumentalities as there are finite objects. Some things he does for men through the solar sun and other things he does for them through every grain of sand. He does yet other things for every man through the instrumentality of every other man. Then, if, in His infinite Wisdom, God should find

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it necessary to do for men what seems a strange thing, in addition to the innumerable other things of His doing which seem less strange, and become incarnate by taking from the womb of a virgin a finite vestment of flesh for his own peculiar indwelling, should it strike us as being impossible? Manifestly it would be as possible as any other thing whatsoever which He has ever done for men. Whether He would do it or not would depend solely upon man's need of His doing so.

It is evident, furthermore, that during the time of God's abiding thus in the finite part of Jesus Christ, causing it to fill its exceptional and marvelous function, He did not cease from abiding in all other finite objects by which they likewise were enabled the while to continue filling their various functions. For similar reasons it was not necessary for Him to cease from abiding in

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his own infinite and divine State of Being transcendent to Nature. Thus the idea of God's incarnation in Jesus Christ does not involve the absurdity of God's "leaving his own throne in the heavens," so to speak, to be in the world. He affects finite things—abides in them—without Himself becoming finite.

## CHAPTER III

### SPIRITUAL TRUTH AND SYMBOLISM AS TWO DISTINCT REALMS OF FACTS DEFINITELY LOCATED

IT WAS shown in the preceding chapter that all things are related, and that relationship means that everything affects and is affected by every other thing—that if any speck of dust should suddenly become annihilated a change of some kind would take place in every object in the universe.

Now, not only are all things related, but there are in existence at least three distinctive subdivisions of relationships. These are:

First, the relations between material substances in Nature and the things predicated of them. (And it is to be noted that by

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things predicated of matter are such true abstractions as time, space, activity, mathematical facts and principles and the like.)

Secondly, the relations between the spiritual realities or substances\* in Human-nature and the true abstractions to be predicated of them.

Thirdly, the relations between the realities of material Nature, on the one hand, and the realities of Human-nature, on the other.

### I

The first of these three subdivisions of relationships is universally acknowledged. All of the natural sciences, with the exception of psychology and related sciences, deal exclusively with the relationships of this first order. There is no scientific fact, other than a psychological or, perhaps, sociological one, which could not be defined as a relation-

\* Chap. IV, Vol. I.

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ship between material substances or things predicated of them. What are the facts of chemistry, for instance, other than facts of relationship between material substances or things predicated thereof? What are the facts of astronomy, of botany, of geology, except facts of relationship between material substances and the abstract things arising out of them? Psychology is the natural science which recognizes such distinctively immaterial or mental phenomena as memory, rationality, will, imagination and various others.

### II

The second subdivision of relationships needs only to be pointed out, and its significance declared, to be universally acknowledged. That there necessarily exists a distinctive order of relationship between all the phenomena of Human-nature must be admitted. Psychology itself amply con-

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firmly this statement. The dispute will come on the question of the boundaries and extent and variety of these mental phenomena. For illustration, friendship, veneration, pride, humility, fear, hope and the like, are phenomena of Human-nature and, as they act upon and are related to each other, they represent the second subdivision of relationships.

That the boundaries and extent and variety of mental phenomena far exceed anything that psychology has ever even imagined becomes at once demonstrated when it is seen that *quality* is the essential characteristic of human loves or experiences. That psychology is not qualified to deal with quality in human loves, is explained in detail in Chapter IV of Volume I, where attention is called to the innumerable shades or degrees of selfish and unselfish qualities which are potential in human life

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and which are themselves realities which may appear as so many phenomena.

This second subdivision of relationships is itself, therefore, to be divided into two parts.

The first part includes all of those relations between mental realities with which psychology can deal. These, as such, *cannot* be identified in any way with either selfishness or unselfishness. The only purpose discernible in them is to serve the temporal interests of men.

*The second part includes all of the relations between the selfish and unselfish qualities of all mental realities.* With these psychology *cannot* deal. The purpose of these is to serve man's chief interest\* which is of eternal duration.

The mental realities with which psychology deals are, indeed, characterized by selfish

\* Chap. IV, Vol. I.

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or unselfish quality; but the psychologist, *as such*, is utterly unable to detect this chief characteristic of these realities. He sees *only those aspects* of mental realities which reveal nothing whatsoever of their essential spiritual qualities, but only their relations to temporal or worldly prosperity.

Different definitions of *spiritual truth*, as distinguished from worldly knowledge or scientific facts, were given in Volume I, and particularly in Chapter II, and the essential difference can again be stated in this connection in another way. Spiritual truth is made up of the facts involved in the relationships between the selfishness and unselfishness which characterize the realities of the human mind or Human-nature. *The truth of which Christ spoke can, then, be actually and accurately located. It is to be found in this second part of the second subdivision of relationships as just*

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*described.* A knowledge of "the truth," then, is primarily a knowledge of quality in human life—a knowledge which distinguishes between the different shades and degrees of selfish and unselfish loves or emotions.

Granting the immortality of the soul, it is evident that the life after death represents an incomparably vaster area of human potentialities than does the life in this world. As suggestive of the future spiritual astronomy, alluded to in Chapter VIII of Volume I, it may be predicted that there are to be spiritual specialists to study and observe, somewhat as astronomers do the sun, moon and stars, those potentialities of Human-nature which now shine and twinkle in the ethereal blue of immortal life, as material planets scintillate in the azure depths of infinite space.

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### III

The third subdivision of relationships should now be noted most carefully, because it serves in a fundamental way in rightly interpreting Divine Revelation.

It is self-evident, as already has been shown, that if two things exist there is a relationship between them. Hence, if Nature and Human-nature both exist there is relationship between them. This relationship between the realities of Human-nature, on the one hand, and the realities of Nature, on the other, is, then, this significant third subdivision of relationships. The materialist, and even the atheist, by the primary principles of logic, must admit the existence of this third realm of relationships or facts. To repeat, for clearness: between the sunshine and the flower is a relationship typical of the first subdivision of relationships;

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between pride and humility is a relationship typical of the second subdivision; between the sunshine and the flower, on the one hand, and pride and humility, on the other, is a relationship typical of the third.

The reason why the recognition of this third subdivision of relationships is so essential in rightly interpreting Divine Revelation, as will be shown later, is because the facts which constitute true symbolism, or "the science of correspondences," are to be found in this particular subdivision; and it is thus made manifest that God employs symbolism or correspondences in revealing spiritual truth to men through His written Word.

Just as the second subdivision of relationship was itself divided into two parts, *the second of which is the realm of spiritual truth*, so this third subdivision of relationships is to be divided into two parts, *the second of*

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*which is the realm of symbols or correspondences.*

The first part includes all of those relations between mental and material realities with which psychology as a natural science can deal. Ordinary psychology, for instance, can take account of the relation of ambition or aspiration to material achievements. It can note the striking relation between ingenuity and machinery, between intellect and books. It can, perhaps, deal with all relations between spirit and matter which disregard selfishness and unselfishness. But with all those relations in which selfishness and unselfishness are to be regarded psychology, as such, is unable to deal.

The second part of this third subdivision of relationships, then, is inclusive of all the relations between selfishness and unselfishness, on the one hand, and the material objects of the world, on the other. When

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it is considered that all the realities of Human-nature, *including even those with which psychology deals*, are characterized by either selfish or unselfish quality (although psychology is not concerned with their quality), then it is seen that all effects registered in matter by human effort bear relationship to the selfish or unselfish *quality* of the effort. *And these must be recognized as existing in addition to the relationships of which psychology takes account.* Ambition, for example, is a powerful motive and produces great material results. But whether the ambition is of a selfish or unselfish quality psychology cannot determine. But even the material result is always vitally related to the *quality* of the ambition, and in ways which affect the eternal well-being of both the individual who is ambitious and the rest of mankind who are affected by his achievements.

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The relations or facts of this second part, then, are seen to be distinct from and superior to those of the first part, to which psychology is limited. This realm not only transcends that of the first, but is incalculably more extensive.

When love or selfishness registers itself in matter, in machinery, books, institutions or social order, then the material achievement, whatever it may be, is the symbol of the particular quality of motive which brought it into being. *Thus it is that this second part of the third subdivision of relationships is the distinctive realm of symbols or correspondences.*

The question now arises, What are the first steps to be taken, or how is the chasm to be bridged, or how is the first entering wedge to be driven, by which the first demonstrable facts of relationship between the spiritual quality of human emotions or

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loves and matter are to be ascertained? It is certain that material science, so called, presents no method by which this can be done. *Please note well this limitation of science.* Any person who seriously asks this question is really inquiring into the nature of Divine Revelation. It will be shown in later chapters that *the literary form of the Bible is unique in that it employs the facts of this particular realm of symbols, causing them to fill the function of spiritual light in bringing to view the selfishness and unselfishness of the innumerable realities of Human-nature.*

## CHAPTER IV

### A STATEMENT OF WHAT CONSTITUTES PROOF OF THE UNIQUE DIVINITY OF THE BIBLE

THAT which constitutes proof of the unique divinity of the Bible is so simple, comparatively, that a statement here of what it is will make doubly plain the meaning of all that is to follow.

In setting forth the great verities of the universe scientists select their words with a view to bringing together a certain series of facts, and in such an order or arrangement as to cause the facts themselves to declare the things that are declared. It is facts that have the revelations to make—*through* the scientist *by means* of words. The approximate age of the earth, for

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instance, is declared, not by the geologist, nor by literature, but by a definite class of phenomena set forth by means of words. It has been shown on page 7 that science is limited in its facts to just one of several existent realms of facts. In Chapter III a certain realm of facts (relationships between spirit and matter) has been located and described as constituting the facts of symbolism. None of the facts of this realm have ever yet made their revelations through any scientist by the use of words,—and yet, inasmuch as they are facts, they have revelations to make—and just as truly as that the facts of chemistry, geology, astronomy, have their revelations to make. Now, it happens that the literature of the Bible is unique in that it alone enables facts of this particular realm to make their revelations—and in a way perfectly analogous to that by which scientific facts make

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their revelations. This is equivalent to saying that the Author of the Bible, in His selection and placing of words, has made them represent, first of all, symbols, rather than what they may seem to represent—and that thus the facts of this distinctive realm of relationships are brought together in such an organic and logical arrangement as to cause them to declare the things which they have to declare. That which constitutes proof of the unique divinity of the Bible, then, is the evidence which shows that the literature of the Bible is such as to cause symbols to declare the things which they have to declare. And it transpires that the declarations which symbols make are nothing other than direct revelations of spiritual truth from the infinite personal God to finite men.

Referring again to the revelations made by certain geological facts, to the irrefutable

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conclusion, for instance, that thousands of years ago certain gravel beds, which are now on the tops of hills, were parts of river beds, it is understood that such a historical verity is dependent upon *many* phenomena of a special class *logically* arranged. Let us imagine an enthusiastic amateur scientist bent upon large discovery, and acting upon the general theory that several simple facts have some complex fact to reveal. Let us imagine his taking a miscellaneous lot of scientific facts and stringing them together like beads on a string, or placing them one after the other like figures in a large number in the effort to produce some general conclusion or large result. What would he accomplish? It is evident that a chemical fact plus an astronomical fact plus a geological fact plus a mathematical fact equals absurdity. Facts, before they can speak, or make their larger revelations, must have

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organic relations and be logically arranged. Now, symbolism has largely deserved the general contempt in which it has been held heretofore for the reason that nearly all believers in it have dealt with symbols somewhat as the imagined amateur just alluded to would deal with his scientific facts in making new discoveries. Symbols are facts or actual relationships between realities and are a class by themselves. In dealing with them they must be dealt with according to the same laws by which all facts are dealt with when employed in the processes of reasoning.

If, in Chapter III, it is made plain that there exists a realm of relationships or facts which constitute symbolism, then it will be evident that these facts, like scientific facts, are subject to a selection that is organic in their relations and logical in their arrangement. The very wording of

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the Bible is such as to select symbols according to their organic relations and to present them in a logical order. Some of the evidences in support of this contention will be presented in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER V

### SYMBOLISM OR THE SCIENCE OF CORRESPONDENCES

IT WAS stated in Chapter III that the second part of the third subdivision of relationships, as therein pointed out and described, is *a distinctive realm of facts all of which are symbols or correspondences*. It was, furthermore, stated that the second part of the second subdivision of relationships, as therein pointed out and described, is *a distinctive realm of facts all of which are spiritual truths as distinguished from the facts of the natural sciences*. It was, furthermore, stated that God employs the facts of symbolism in His written Word to fill the function of spiritual light by which men may perceive the facts of spiritual

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truth. It is by the spiritual light of Revelation that we come into the knowledge of what Christ meant by "the truth" in contradistinction to what the modern materialistic scholar means by truth.

There is an orderly way for acquiring knowledge of spiritual things just as there is one for acquiring knowledge of material things. If an astronomer should be asked by a man who had never studied mathematics to prove to him that the sun is approximately ninety-two million miles from the earth, the astronomer would reply that it would be necessary for the man first to take an extensive course in mathematical study. No man can actually *see for himself* that the earth's distance from the sun is just what the astronomers declare it to be without first acquiring a knowledge of the higher mathematics, which involves years of study. Likewise, no man can actually

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see for himself certain important spiritual verities without first making the necessary preliminary studies. Therefore, by way of simple mental preparation for seeing the conclusions reached in the succeeding chapters, the statements of this chapter will serve an important use.

It is highly important that the realm of relationships wherein the facts of spiritual truth reside, and the other one wherein the facts of symbolism reside, should be clearly distinguished. To repeat, briefly: the realm of truth includes all the relations between the selfish and unselfish qualities potential in human life; and the realm of symbols includes all the relations between these selfish and unselfish qualities in human life, on the one hand, and the material realities of the world, on the other.

The statement that the word symbolism or correspondences represents this distinc-

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tive realm of relationships described will be surprising to many people who have thought of symbolism as something fictitious. All such persons are requested, for the time being, to think of symbolism or correspondences as newly coined words to represent a newly discovered reality (for such it will be to them, because it is certainly true that the mythical thing for which the word symbolism has falsely stood in their minds is not the reality for which it should truly stand). Most of the so-called symbolic interpretations of sacred writings have been false. Men of mystical tendencies, with some absurd or egotistical idea of their own to prove, have resorted to spiritual sophistry and palmed off their erroneous claims upon their deluded followers as symbolism. In the minds of most men, therefore, symbolism stands for spiritual sophistry and the clever juggling of mystical hallucinations.

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In Chapter II of Volume I it was stated that the centermost physical fact of Nature is the sun of pure fire sending out its radiations of heat and light. This is the one fact which gives determination to all other natural facts. It was also stated as a parallel that the centermost fact of Human-nature is the personal God of infinite and divine Love and Wisdom sending out His radiations of love and truth. This is the one fact in Human-nature which gives determination to all other spiritual facts. In that chapter some analogies were pointed out between the sun's activity in Nature and God's activity in Human-nature. If, now, we inquire into the relationship between God and the solar sun, we will see some clear outlines of the larger aspects of symbolism. If symbolism consists of the facts of relationship between all qualities of love, on the one hand, and material things, on

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the other, then the first question naturally to be asked is, What is the relation between God, who is Love Itself, and the solar sun, which is the chief of all material realities? God's relation to the solar sun can be no less significant than that of the Creator to the created. If God, who is Spirit and who is Love, is the Creator, then the relation between Him and the sun, or between Spirit and matter, which is the same, is that of cause and effect. Indeed, symbolism shows that all material realities are the effects of spiritual realities, and not *vice versa*.

Inasmuch as it is an absurdity that something should be created from nothing, it follows, and is also revealed, that if the sun derives its substance and activities (its matter and energy) from the Substance and Activities which are self-existent in God, then the sum total of the effects of God's

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relationship to the sun is the sun's creation and preservation. Its preservation is the same thing as its being made to fill its function. And, reciprocally, the sum total of the effects of the sun's relation to God is God's satisfaction in having His purposes fulfilled in creating and preserving the sun.

Furthermore, the perpetual energy exerted by the sun is caused by the perpetual influx into it from God who is its Creator and Preserver. Indeed, the relation between God and the sun is so vital and so constant that if the influx from God into the sun should at any time cease, the sun would instantly cease to be. Cessation of His influx into the sun would be the sun's annihilation. This is just as true as that catastrophe would befall the earth should the sun's radiations, for any reason, be withheld or cut off from the earth.

As stated above, if God is the Creator and

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Preserver of the solar sun, and if God is Spirit and the sun is matter, the conclusion follows that matter is an effect and spirit is the cause. From this it may be stated, as *the first guiding principle in the study of symbolism, that everything in Nature corresponds to, or is the symbol of, its proximate spiritual cause.* According to the dictionary definition of the word "proximate," the proximate cause of anything would be that particular cause in the train of causes which immediately precedes it as the effect. To repeat, then, for clearness and emphasis: *any natural or material object corresponds to, or is the symbol of, its proximate spiritual cause.* This presupposes that many things in this world have proximate *spiritual* causes rather than proximate material causes, which is the case.

It is only in keeping with true scientific thought to say that if there be a God, He

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does the things *which He does* according to some order, by *using means, methods and instrumentalities*. If He created the sun and the planets and the men who inhabit the planets, we know, as an axiomatic fact, that He did it with something which was already in existence, and that He did it in some way.

If we would know what it is to which the sun corresponds, or of which it is the symbol, we must then seek to find the sun's proximate spiritual cause. In Chapter II, in treating of relationships, it was said that God creates some finite things from Himself directly or immediately, and that He creates other finite things mediately, through the instrumentality of other finite things which can be used to that end. If the solar sun were one of the things created immediately or directly by God without the employment of any other finite instrumentality, or, in

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other words, if God were the proximate cause of the sun, then the solar sun would correspond to God and be a symbol of Him. It happens, however, that in creating and preserving the solar sun God employs something of His spiritual universe as the instrumental agency, and is not Himself its proximate cause and, therefore, the sun, instead of being the symbol of God, is the symbol of *this other object* in the spiritual universe which is its proximate spiritual cause. To describe this object of the spiritual universe, of which the sun is the symbol, would involve some tedious descriptions of spiritual realities which are not vital here.

Attention is now called to an important fact which will be new to most persons. Only a small number of the objects of this world, relatively, are *the effects of natural causes*. The proximate causes of most of

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the things of this material world are purely spiritual. The *spiritual universe* produces more effects in this world than does the solar sun itself. This important fact may best be set forth by naming some of the objects which are caused directly by spiritual influx from the spiritual world rather than by natural influx from the solar sun.

Attention was called in Chapter III to certain relations between mental and material realities with which psychology can deal. It takes account, for instance, of the relation of ambition to material achievements, of ingenuity to machinery, of intellect to books. Inasmuch as the human mind is spirit, it must be acknowledged that spirit is the proximate cause of all the things fashioned by the hands of men. The human mind does not derive its energy from the solar sun, but from God. The creations of men, then, are not the effects of influx from

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the solar sun, but rather the effects of influx from the spiritual universe, of which the human mind is, even now, an unconscious inhabitant. It follows that every human achievement, every record of human activity in the materials of the world, is a symbol of the particular quality of the motive of the man or men who did the work. The material record of human effort always corresponds to the quality of the motive which lies behind it.

It happens that the spiritual universe is not limited to the human lives which at any one time inhabit this material world. It includes and embraces the lives of all human beings who have ever existed and their growth to the present time. The spiritual universe, therefore, is to be conceived of as an actual and inhabited realm so much greater than this material universe as hardly to be compared with it. This

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being the case the relation between that transcendent universe and this material universe would naturally be intimate and universal. Indeed, this relation is such that different forms of influx descend from thence into every realm of material Nature, producing various and marvelous effects.

In noting these effects we will call attention, for purposes of illustration, to several of the most striking ones. A man's physical body, for instance, does not derive its form and construction from the solar sun but rather from the spiritual universe just alluded to. All animal and vegetable *forms*, and even many of the earth's mineral and geological *formations*, are the effects of influx from the spiritual universe and not from the solar sun. We speak of "raw materials" from which manufactured products are made. The raw materials, so to speak, in Nature, represent the things which derive

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their origin from the solar sun, whereas the manufactured products, so to speak, are directly the outcome of spiritual influx. Hence, the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, with their innumerable *forms*, are the effects of spirit and not effects of solar radiations. What science calls energy is from the sun, but the evolutionary direction given to energy is from the spiritual universe. Thus the claim of the materialistic evolutionist that higher forms come from lower (without further explanation), which is the same as that something comes from nothing, is an absurdity. On the contrary, it may be seen that all effects and developments in matter are produced by the influx of life from God through the spiritual universe according to an evolutionary order. All of the shades and degrees of qualities of human life, from the highest heaven to the lowest hell, produce their effects in Nature.

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These effects correspond to and are the symbols of their respective proximate spiritual causes. In Nature, therefore, there exist the symbols of all that is in both heaven and hell—the symbols of all that is potential in Human-nature—the symbols of all the shades and degrees of both selfishness and unselfishness in human life.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES

LIGHT is itself evidence of its existence. The material objects revealed by light are themselves evidence of their existence. If, as said, the function of Divine Revelation is that of spiritual light; and if the selfish and unselfish qualities of human life are the spiritual objects revealed by spiritual light, then the evidences of all that this book claims for the Bible are to be adduced by the simple method of bringing this spiritual light to view, together with some of the spiritual objects which it reveals. This requires simply the application of the key by which the Scriptures are unlocked and by which men may enter into the spiritual understanding of them.

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The "Science of Correspondences" is this key. To interpret the Bible according to the science of correspondences, which is to read it as a book of symbols, is to see it as a luminary the brilliancy of whose spiritual light exceeds that of the sun's natural light. Only by what the Bible, as light, reveals are the wonders and the vastnesses of Human-nature made manifest. Our method, then, of adducing the sufficient reasons for believing in the unique divinity of the Bible is to open the door of Scriptural interpretation by the application of this key.

Enough has already been said to show that love, which is of the will, is the primal element in human life; and that, in finite human life, love is either selfish or unselfish in quality; and that the relative degrees of purity and impurity of love are innumerable. Intelligence or thought, which is of the understanding, takes its rise from love—

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is, indeed, primarily, the consciousness of one's emotional experiences. In this sense, intelligence is the perfect counterpart of love or, what is the same, the understanding is the perfect counterpart of the will. These two faculties, the will and the understanding, are the first two great subdivisions of human life. It is evident that a man is not a man without both of these faculties and that these two comprise the whole of the man. There is, to be sure, a third *characteristic*, without which a man could not be a man, and that is his activity or power of doing things. The existence of will and understanding without constant achievement is as unthinkable as the existence of energy without matter. The trinity in both God and man, then, is will, understanding and activity (and activity implies achievement).

These preliminary observations are necessary to the first simple start in applying this

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key of interpretation to the Scriptures. We start with the will and the understanding as the first subdivision of Human-nature, and as inclusive of all that is in human life. This means that "the proximate spiritual cause," already alluded to, of any material or natural object is either something of the will or something of the understanding. This means, furthermore, that everything in Nature is the symbol of something either of the will or of the understanding.

The *love* which is of the will may be, as already said, either selfish or unselfish. If unselfish, it is usually called simply love, and if selfish, it is called evil. The thought which originates in evil is falsity and that which originates in pure love is truth. We have then before us love and truth, evil and falsity, as four simple words which stand for the four subdivisions of all the realities in finite human life, and this gives us our starting

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point for studying symbols. There is not any material object in the universe but what is the symbol of something of these four things. This is no more remarkable than that there is nothing in the entire realm of Human-nature but what is of these four things.

We will now select a material object which is frequently mentioned in the Bible. We will apply the pragmatic test by showing how "the theory works." This will serve only as one example. Let us select the stone. We have said that all stones in the world are the natural effects of proximate *spiritual* causes. Without the existence of a spiritual reality in Human-nature, of which the stone is the symbol, the stone would never have come into existence in Nature.

Again, if our theory is correct, this proximate spiritual cause must be something of

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the four things above mentioned, namely, love, truth, evil, falsity. And right here another part of the theory should be stated more definitely than before. It is that the function of any material object in Nature is perfectly and accurately analogous to the function of that which is its proximate spiritual cause in Human-nature. Let us "guess," for the time being, that the proximate spiritual cause of all stones in the world is truth and falsity and that it is not love and evil, which is to say that it is something of the understanding and not anything of the will. If this guess were the correct one, then, if the theory worked, it would mean that the word stone, *wherever* found in the Scriptures, must invariably stand as the symbol of either truth or falsity, and never as the symbol of either love or evil.

We need guess no longer, because it is

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a fact that the proximate spiritual cause of stones is truth and falsity, and never is it love and evil. And it furthermore transpires that wherever the word stone is found in the Scriptures, whether in Genesis, the Psalms, one of the Prophets or one of the Gospels, it is invariably the symbol of some quality of either truth or falsity and is never the symbol of any quality of either love or evil. This wonderfully significant fact means that when any passage of Scripture, in which the word stone occurs, is interpreted according to its symbols, no sequence or sense can be gotten out of it unless the word stone is recognized as the symbol of some quality of truth or falsity and never of love or evil, but if so interpreted the revelations are reasonable and manifest. In the next chapter, entitled "Some Illustrations of Symbolical Interpretation," it will be shown how symbols are

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to be read if we would get from the Scriptural passages the spiritual ideas which symbols convey.

Let us consider *wood* as another material object mentioned frequently in Scripture. It happens that wherever the word wood occurs in the Bible, unlike that of stone, it stands as the symbol of either love or evil and never does it stand as the symbol of truth or falsity. The word animal, and all specific names of animals, except birds, fishes and insects, are always the symbols of either love or evil and never of truth or falsity.

Preparatory to the next chapter several other general statements of great significance are highly important. When the Bible is read according to symbols, the perfection and clearness of the spiritual ideas increase as we go further and deeper into particulars and details. This needs to be illustrated.

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There are, as shown, different degrees of love and of truth and different degrees of evil and falsity. In degeneration we have noted that there are possible depths to which a man may gradually descend, and, in regeneration, there are possible heights to which he may gradually ascend. Hence there are innumerable qualities of both good and evil. But, in ascending to the highest states possible in the regeneration, one passes through three distinctive planes. These are called the three "discrete" degrees of human life. These have their opposites in evil or in degeneration. These three planes are termed "natural," "spiritual" and "celestial." Hence the words natural, spiritual and celestial stand for the three most distinctive qualities of unselfish love. There are innumerable qualities of unselfish love, but these are divided into three general groups or planes, the highest of which

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is celestial, the middle of which is spiritual, and the lowest of which is natural.

Now, it happens that the proximate spiritual cause of some things in Nature is "celestial" love as distinguished from love of other qualities, and, furthermore, as distinguished from truth and falsity of all qualities. If we knew just what objects in Nature owed their existence to celestial quality of love in Human-nature, then we would say that wherever those objects were mentioned in the Bible they would invariably stand as the symbols of celestial love. It happens that the *olive* is one of these material objects whose proximate spiritual cause is "celestial" quality of love. And so, as we find actually to be the case, the word olive is always used by the Author of the Bible to stand for "*celestial*" love.

Again, "*spiritual*" quality of love is the proximate spiritual cause of the vine.

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Hence the word vine always stands for spiritual quality of love wherever employed in Scripture.

Again, "*natural*" quality of love is the proximate spiritual cause of the fig tree. Hence, the word fig or fig tree in Scripture always stands for natural quality of unselfish love. Illustrations of this kind could be adduced indefinitely. The word water, for instance, employed so frequently in the Bible, is invariably the symbol of "*natural truth*" (or its opposite) as distinguished from any of the others. The precious stones are symbols of spiritual and celestial qualities of truth as distinguished from the other qualities.

The way should now be prepared for some illustrations of symbolical interpretation which follow in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VII

### SOME ILLUSTRATIONS OF SYMBOLICAL INTER- PRETATION

“Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at His presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.”—(Isaiah 19 : 1.)

PARTICULAR attention is called to the two words *Egypt* and *cloud* in this text. Egypt, in whatever part of the Bible it may occur, invariably stands as the symbol of that particular kind of truth, as distinguished from any kind of love, which may be described as *sensuous or scientific truth*. But before we see the purpose of this symbol in this text we must see it in its relation to other symbols in the text. Just as one word cannot express an idea which requires for its expression a sentence

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of words, so one symbol cannot reveal a spiritual message which requires for its revelation several correctly associated symbols. *Every sentence in the Bible is a veritable sentence of symbols in addition to being a sentence of words.* Just as words are signs of things so symbols are signs of things, with the difference only that the latter are signs of *spiritual* things. When properly associated, symbols convey ideas just as words do when properly associated, with the difference only that symbols convey spiritual ideas alone. Neither words nor symbols convey ideas when improperly associated. For instance, what idea is to be gained by the following association of words: Will and be be happy virtuous you? These very same words, when differently associated, convey the following idea: Be virtuous and you will be happy. Inasmuch as all material objects are symbols, so like-

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wise all words in all books are symbols. The word stone is a symbol of truth and the word olive is the symbol of celestial love in any book where they are to be found for the reason that truth is the proximate spiritual cause of stones and celestial love that of olives. But if we attempt to read Shakespeare, for instance, or any other book than the Bible, by the association of its symbols we get precisely the same sense as we do from the association of the words above presented: "Will and be be happy virtuous you." This is to say that the arrangement of words in books generally has no regard whatever for any symbolical interpretations to be made; and if symbolical interpretations should be attempted, it would be found that no ideas or sense whatever could be gained. But with the Bible, as with no other book in existence, its sentences are sentences of word-symbols,

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and these convey spiritual thoughts and ideas in a connected and rational and logical manner. The Bible, then, stands out absolutely unique in all of literature as being the one and only book which is written in the language of symbols.

It will be seen, now, that our text cannot be spiritually interpreted unless we know the symbolical meaning of at least some of the other important words in it besides Egypt. It would be as difficult as to interpret the meaning of a sentence in a foreign tongue when the meaning of only one word in that sentence was known. The word *cloud* is another important word in the text. The word cloud is the symbol of something just as definite as that of which Egypt is the symbol. And wherever the word cloud appears in the Bible, be it remembered, it always stands as the symbol of the same thing. This is just as true as that the word

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fire, whether found in Shakespeare, Emerson, or Ruskin, is always the sign of the same reality.

Cloud is the symbol of a spiritual reality which may be described as all *symbolically constructed sentences*. Wherever, in any book or manuscript on the face of the earth, any sentences of words can be found which are constructed according to the language of symbols, they are the spiritual reality of which the word cloud is the symbol. But, inasmuch as the Bible is the only book in the world which contains any symbolically constructed sentences, and inasmuch as the literature or "literal sense" of the Bible is the entrance to the symbolical or "internal" sense, *therefore, the word cloud is the symbol of the "literal sense" of the Bible*. Hence, whether we say "all symbolically constructed sentences" or "the literal sense of the Bible" we mean precisely

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the same thing. When the Lord Jesus Christ said, in speaking of His second coming, that He would be seen "coming in the clouds" (Matthew, 24 : 30—and other passages), He meant that He would be revealed to the spiritual perceptions of men in the symbols of His written Word. When the time should come when He would be so perceived, then that would be the time of His second coming—hence, His second coming is not in physical form to the bodily eyes of men, but in the form of the Divine Truth to the spiritual perceptions of men. In Revelation (14 : 14) it is said, "Behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man." And in Daniel (7 : 13), "Behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven." In these verses, the spiritual idea involved is that of the Lord's revealing Himself, or spiritual truth's revealing itself, which is the same

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thing, by means of the language of symbols which He alone is able to employ. The Lord enables us to interpret the language of symbols, which He alone employs, but it is not within our power either to talk or to write symbolically ourselves. Some foolish attempts to do so have sometimes been made.

Is it not beginning, now, to be manifest what is meant by the Lord's coming into Egypt on a swift cloud? If *Egypt* corresponds to scientific knowledge, and if clouds correspond to God's distinctively created literature of symbolical writing, by the instrumentality of which He reveals to men such spiritual truth as men are capable of receiving, then the *general outline* of what this text reveals is, *that the Lord, by revelation through His written Word, enables men to see scientific truth in its true relations to spiritual truth.*

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Men are born with selfish tendencies towards all kinds of evil practices. Many of the deceitful appearances in Nature, which are commonly accepted as scientific truths, harmonize perfectly with these selfish predispositions. When a man is willing to remain selfish (according to the spiritual standard) he will use his rational faculties to formulate such scientific conclusions as will seem to justify him in his selfish life. The word "*idols*" in the text is the symbol of just such rational scientific deductions and conclusions—which are essentially agnostic and atheistic. The word "*heart*" in the text is the symbol of the human will. It is *always* the symbol of the will. Hence, the expression that the heart of Egypt shall melt, signifies that the will of a degenerating man, one just emerging from Egyptian agnosticism, becomes submissive to the Will of God. Then it is that the "*idols*" of

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materialistic and anti-religious conclusions are "moved," and never before.

If we remember that there is always an analogy between the activities of a material object and the activities of the spiritual object to which it corresponds, we will see that the uses which *clouds* serve in Nature are analogous to the uses which *the literal sense of the Bible serves in Human-nature*. There are different kinds of clouds, and an entire book might be written describing cloud phenomena. But in brief, clouds serve the general purpose of tempering and modifying the heat and light of the sun to the accommodation of everything that grows upon the earth. By the use of the language of symbols, the Divine Love and Truth from God become so tempered and modified as to suit the receptive capacity of any man, from the most ignorant and depraved, to the wisest and most regenerate.

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The analogies between the uses of clouds and the uses of symbolical writings could themselves furnish an extensive field of study to some spiritual scientist who should make this his specialty.

The word "Egypt" is usually associated in our minds with Moses and Pharaoh and the wonderful deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Moses himself was educated in Egyptian schools and, as a boy, was a member of Pharaoh's own household. In studying the sequence and logic of the spiritual ideas involved in this story of the Exodus, it is most significant to make note of the fact that, after the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, or slavery, the promised land of Canaan was not reached at once, but a forty years' wandering through the wilderness was to intervene. In the wording of the Scripture itself it is said. "And it came to pass, when

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Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest, peradventure, the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea." (Exodus 13 : 17, 18.)

Without going too much into particulars, a most general kind of a statement of the symbolical or correspondential interpretation of this historical narrative as given in the Book of Exodus may illustrate the rational connection of ideas in the symbols of the Bible. Egyptian bondage signifies, as should be evident from what has just been shown, a degenerate state of servility to a ruling love which is essentially selfish. With such a man, the rational faculties are employed to utilize all sensuous or scientific knowledges in such a sophistical way as to

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defend the evil determinations of his ruling love. Pharaoh represents just such agnostic and atheistic philosophies. Such philosophies themselves are Pharaoh, but individual men who hold them, whether they be presidents or professors of colleges, or simply ignorant egotists, are the Israelitish slaves—even in our day. The land of Canaan is the symbol of certain things as yet potential in the life at the time when the truly religious or regenerating life begins, as represented by deliverance from Egyptian bondage. It represents potential states of unselfishness and power which are to be acquired or “arrived at” by certain means and methods—sometimes called heaven. These means and methods for acquiring the possible spiritual states of life represented by Canaan, are revealed in particular by the symbolical interpretations of the experiences of the children of Israel during their forty years in

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the wilderness. In the passage above quoted it is stated, "for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war and return to Egypt." The word "war" is always the symbol of spiritual temptation. The passage just quoted refers to the operations of the Divine Providence in leading men *gradually* through the necessary succession of experiences, to the acquirement of the kind of character which Canaan stands for. The word "wilderness" is the symbol of a state of life wherein there is a lack of spiritual virtues and an abundance of evil tendencies. All degenerating men represent a wilderness occupied by nothing other than barren and wild and destructive things, whereas a regenerating man represents a wilderness which is gradually being reclaimed, as it were, by human settlement.

Particular attention is called to the word "*forty*," because it represents a very striking

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symbol. It will help further to illustrate the nature of symbols as they are employed throughout the entire Bible. It was *forty* years that the children of Israel remained in the wilderness. It was also *forty* days that Jesus was in the wilderness with the wild beasts when tempted of the Devil. At the time of the flood it rained during *forty* days and *forty* nights, and then, again, the flood was *forty* days upon the earth. When Moses sent special envoys to search out and to spy out the land of Canaan, it is said that they returned from their search after *forty* days. In the laws of Moses *forty* stripes were to be given, "and not exceed." At a later time in Jewish history, the Israelites were delivered into the hands of the Philistines for *forty* years. (Judges 13 : 1.) Before David killed Goliath, "the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself *forty* days. David's

reign was *forty* years. Solomon's reign was *forty* years. In the Psalms it is said: "*Forty* years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, it is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways." (Psalms 95 : 10.) In Ezekiel it is said: "I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate. . . . No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited for *forty* years. And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste, shall be desolate *forty* years. . . . Yet, thus saith the Lord God, at the end of *forty* years will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they are scattered." (Ezekiel 29 : 10-13.) In the passages here quoted and referred to, as likewise in others, even the *literal* contexts

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indicate what the symbolical meaning of the word forty is. It is everywhere associated with the idea of temptation, and is always and invariably the symbol of *the duration of some spiritual temptation or temptations*. This means that in the interpretation of any verse of Scripture which contains the word forty, the spiritual idea involved is always dependent upon the interpretation of "forty" as signifying "duration of temptation."

By way of digression it might be remarked here that the number *seven* is the symbol of what is spiritually holy and sacred. The number *ten*, when representing what is spiritually good instead of what is bad, is the symbol of *all that remains*, whether much or little of spiritual life. The word "remains" is a technical theological term standing for the spiritual thing of which *ten* is the symbol. It also means "all" of

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good which there abides. The idea of "remains" or "all" is involved in the *ten* commandments, and in the *ten* good men who would have been sufficient to save Sodom and Gomorrah, as likewise in all other passages where the word *ten* is to be found.

Before the children of Israel were delivered from the hand of Pharaoh, a great many miracles were performed in Egypt, and again others, also, during their wanderings in the wilderness. When the accounts of these miracles are read spiritually instead of literally, it is seen that they are all perfectly analogous to certain things which the Divine Providence does in behalf of the man who is allowing himself to be delivered from degeneration, and to be led in the regeneration. Notwithstanding that some few responsibilities have been transferred, as it were, by God from Himself to men, yet, in the work of a man's growth, the man does not more

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than one thing for himself, comparatively, where God does thousands of things for him. Actually, God does thousands of things in a man's behalf where the man does one thing in his own behalf. These miracles are analogous to some of the marvelous things which God does in the interests of regenerating men which they could not possibly do for themselves.

After a man has started in the religious life, which represents the point where he has been delivered from the hand of Pharaoh, and where he is just entering upon his "forty years' wandering through the wilderness," he begins to detect, by spiritual perception, unselfish qualities of his own experiences. These things are observed by what is called "introspection" under the light of revelation from the Word, which is the same thing as truth revealed through symbolical writings. At times, such a man

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(the regenerating man) sees in his own individual soul's progress the unmistakable leading of the hand of Providence. The evidences of the Divine Providence become as manifest in these visions of one's own unselfish experiences as were the evidences of supernatural power in the miracles to the children of Israel. Just in the sense that these miracles were "signs" to the children of Israel, so the supernatural helps observed in our regenerating progress are the "only *signs*" which are vouchsafed to regenerating men. "The sign of the Prophet Jonas" spoken of by Christ to "the evil and adulterous generation" who came to him seeking after a sign, as "the only sign" which should be given, means, when symbolically interpreted, these very unmistakable and manifest evidences of supernatural power in our behalf which a regenerating man sees by introspection in certain un-

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selfish experiences, just as if he saw the miracles themselves through the veil of analogy—these miracles are actually mirrored in one's regenerating experiences.

But now, notwithstanding the truth of all this, we find, as a matter of experience, something vitally related to it which is most strange and surprising. Sometimes a regenerating man *forgets* that he has seen evidences of the Divine Providence in his own spiritual growth. No one knows in advance the peculiarities and the complexities of the moods or states through which he must proceed. One thing is common to all, and that is, that as our *moods* change our point of view changes. Some of these peculiarities are depicted in one of the accounts of the "murmurings" of the children of Israel. In spite of the fact that these people had been witnesses to the numerous miracles which were per-

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formed in Egypt and of the other numerous miracles which attended their journeyings after their deliverance, yet, when they came into certain perilous situations, where they were threatened with hunger, they said to Moses and Aaron, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger." (Exodus 16 : 3.) This means that a regenerating man, who is actually experiencing unselfish qualities of love, and who has seen in these experiences the unmistakable evidences of the supernatural powers of the Divine Providence, comes into states of temptation, where, for the time being, his viewpoint is so changed that he partly believes that he must have been mistaken. His memory about spiritual

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things becomes in a measure quiescent. In these states of doubt and spiritual gloom, he may even question whether living a religious life is worth while. He thinks enviously of the "flesh pots of Egypt" which represent certain selfish satisfactions and pleasure found in certain forms of evil in the old degenerate or less regenerate state. But, if his religious purposes are true, these states of temptation are always temporary and he continues to go forward along that course through life which is leading him gradually, but certainly, to the realization of all that is best and highest in him potentially.

Soon after Abram (afterwards called Abraham) was "called of the Lord" and was promised the land of Canaan, it happened that he was led by circumstances into the land of Egypt. Centuries later, soon after the birth of Jesus, a peculiar combina-

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tion of circumstances led Joseph and Mary to take the infant Child into the land of Egypt. The symbolical interpretations of these two accounts are very closely related. They involve many fine points of interpretation which could not, with profit, be presented here. It ought to be seen, however, that these two incidents, in conjunction with the other interpretations already indicated, give particular emphasis to the idea that worldly or natural or scientific knowledge is, *and must necessarily be*, an indispensable agency in the acquirement of spiritual knowledge. And yet, sensuous or scientific knowledges may, in the hands of an evil man, be employed to confirm his agnostic and atheistic predispositions. The fact of man's personal spiritual *responsibility* here again looms large.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE UNIQUE DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST

“Beginning at Moses and all the Prophets He (Christ after his resurrection) expounded unto them (His disciples) in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. . . . And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.” (Luke 24 : 27, 44, 45.)

**I**N Chapter IV it was stated that that which constitutes proof of the unique divinity of the Bible is the evidence which shows that the literature of the Bible is such as to cause the facts of symbolism to declare the things which they have to declare. Now, that which constitutes proof of the unique divinity of Jesus Christ is the

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affirmation and explication of this fact by the divine revelations of the Bible. Divine Revelation not only declares the divinity of Christ in forms of direct statement but, from beginning to end, including the Old Testament as well as the New, it treats of His nature and of His experiences in such a way as to enable us to become intimately acquainted with Him, somewhat as we become acquainted with a close friend.

Attention is again called to what was said in Chapter I pertaining to *phenomena* as primary or basic facts. In laying the foundation for our knowledge of Jesus Christ as God incarnate, so as to make it rationally impregnable, Where do we begin? and, What are the first facts with which we build? The facts with which we start are those of the realm of "truth" located and described in Chapter III, which were shown to be *phenomena* as distinguished from any

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other class of facts. Thus the basic or primary facts, which constitute the foundation materials of all real knowledge, form also the basis of our knowledge of God's incarnation in Jesus Christ. It happens, as becomes apparent while interpreting the Scriptures, as will be shown, that there is a peculiar and vital relation between all unselfish human experiences and the Personality of the Lord Jesus Christ. The relation of Jesus Christ, as God incarnate, to the unselfish developments of a human soul is seen, under the light of Revelation, to be as real and as intimate as the relation of the solar sun to all forms of vegetable and animal growth in the world.

Attention is again called to what was said in Chapter II pertaining to relationship. Everything affects and is affected by other things. We become acquainted with things, or acquire a knowledge of things, by noting

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these reciprocal effects. Learning of God, or becoming acquainted with Him, is in itself as simple as gaining a knowledge of the mineral, animal and vegetable kingdoms of the world, *provided* we know how to observe and classify the effects due to His presence in the world—or due to His relationship to the things of the world. Now it happens that when we turn our attention to selfish and unselfish qualities in human life and study them under the light of Divine Revelation (under the light of the Bible symbolically interpreted) we find that to observe and classify reciprocal effects between the human soul and God is as possible as to observe and classify the reciprocal effects between the earth and the sun. In observing and classifying the effects of God's presence in the world, under the light of Divine Revelation, we formulate our rational conclusions pertaining to God

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and other spiritual conceptions. That Jesus Christ was God incarnate does not imply the absurdity that the finite mind can comprehend the infinite. Human knowledge at best is always incomplete. The knowledge that one has of his most intimate friend is incomplete but, usually, it is satisfactory. Our knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, while always increasing, must forever remain incomplete, but, it may always be most satisfactory because, in studying the effects produced in our lives by His relation to us, we learn of His Love and Wisdom and of those marvelous things of His Divine Providence by which we are made to feel perfectly safe and secure in this precarious world.

It happens, and providentially so, that the Bible contains numerous passages from which the spiritual or symbolical sense shines somewhat as a man's character beams

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from his face. In these passages the internal sense coincides with the literal expressions. At this point we will note several such passages wherein the literal and symbolical senses both unite in declaring the Lord's divinity.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. *And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.*” (John I : 1-4, 9, 14.)

The quotation at the beginning of the chapter is a declaration that the entire Scriptures treat of Jesus Christ and that He fulfilled them all. The same fact was

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affirmed by Christ Himself in His Sermon on the Mount following His statement that He was come not to destroy but to *fulfil*. "For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till *all be fulfilled*." (Matt. 5 : 18.) That the fulfilment of the Scriptures was by Jesus Christ Himself is shown by the literal sense of many passages as well as by the internal sense of *every* passage. One such passage is that one which describes Christ as reading in the synagogue at Nazareth: "And He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up: and as His custom was He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the Prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book He found the place where it was written, The spirit of the Lord is upon me because He

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hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And He closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, *This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.*" (Luke 4 : 16-22.)

At Gethsemane, when the multitude came with Judas to take Christ, and one of the disciples drew his sword, Christ said "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and that He will presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? *But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?*" (Matt. 26 : 53, 54.) Again

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it is said in the same chapter, "But all this was done that the Scriptures of the Prophets might *be fulfilled.*" (26 : 56.) "Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: *for it is written,* I will smite the Shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." (26 : 31.) "Then He took unto Him the twelve and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and *all the things that are written by the Prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished.*" (Luke 18 : 31.)

The immediate and personal presence of God in the world is the central and general fact of the Incarnation. In one of the numerous prophecies relating to the coming of the Messiah it is said, "Therefore, the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and she shall call His name Emanuel." (Isaiah 7 : 14.) It is said in Matthew in so many

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words that the Lord's birth was the fulfilment of this prophecy: "Now all this was done *that it might be fulfilled* which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son and they shall call His name *Emanuel*, which, being interpreted, is, *God with us.*"

After the resurrection, and after the Lord had met with His disciples and had "expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself," the disciples "said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and *while He opened to us the Scriptures?*" (Luke 24 : 32.) If the Scriptures, according to their internal or symbolical interpretation, treat of the Lord Jesus Christ, the question naturally arises, What are the specific things about Jesus Christ of which they treat? The answer is

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simple. They treat of the actual *experiences* of Jesus Christ while in the world. Did not Christ begin life as a babe in the manger? Did He not grow up through infancy and boyhood into manhood? Were there any two hours during all of that time when the conditions and circumstances of His life were precisely the same? It was with Him as with us in this respect that His life in the world was a steady and gradual unfoldment by which one experience succeeded another according to its own order. Now the chief thing to be predicated of any human experience is its *quality*. Christ's experiences were innumerable and, in a composite way, represented the experiences of mankind. And the quality of His experiences, in every instance, was the absolutely perfect quality, by which the "standard of all values," treated of in Chapter III, Volume I, is established and revealed. Inas-

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much as the entire Scriptures treat of this standard of quality, as it was actually exemplified and experienced by Christ in His innumerable experiences, therefore, the "criterion of truth," also treated of in that chapter, is nothing other than Divine Revelation as herein set forth—which is the revelation of this standard of values.

When false or misleading conceptions have, for any reason, become firmly established or deeply rooted in any one's mind it is difficult to enable that person to see the truth which is in opposition to them. One of the chief reasons why the revelations pertaining to the nature of Jesus Christ are not more generally recognized and accepted is because of the prevalence of many false conceptions of Him. The belief in Christ as a third person in the God-head, and the other equally irrational belief that the Infinite became finite in Christ, are

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examples of false conceptions which barricade the door of true interpretation. Seeing the possibility and reasonableness of any revelation must necessarily precede the knowledge of it. The possibility and the reasonableness of God's incarnation in Jesus Christ are both dependent upon thinking of "The Lord thy God as one Lord"—there can, in the nature of things, be but one infinite Being. In becoming Emanuel, God with us,—personally present with us in the world,—to reveal His relations to men, and His attitude toward men, and to accomplish other works of salvation and redemption, it was not necessary for Him to become changed in any way. *When God acts within the finite realm He always and necessarily subjects Himself to the limitations of the finite.* This necessity of subjecting Himself to finite limitations does not destroy His relations with men in the world, neither

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does it change Him in any way. In the preservation of a sun or of a grain of sand He subjects himself to the limitations of the sun or the grain of sand *in so far as His action in reference to them is concerned*. To create a finite human organism through the instrumentality of a virgin mother, and Himself to abide in it (or affect it) so as to make it exemplify, in an absolutely perfect way, His own Love and Wisdom and Power, under the limitations and restrictions imposed by such a finite organism in a wicked world, would be both possible and reasonable, and it would only depend upon His having sufficient reason for doing it. Inasmuch as it was worth His while to create man in the beginning, and has ever since been worth His while to preserve the human race, we can see how it might be worth His while also to do all that the Incarnation involves. In thinking of Jesus Christ as God, we think

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of His actions in the world as God's actions when limited and restricted by the conditions and circumstances of the assumed finite humanity which was taken from the virgin mother Mary. Christ's actions were *God's* actions as the Unlimited was subjected to certain limitations; *which means that they reveal God's disposition towards, or His relationship to, the definite and concrete and limited finite interests of men.* If God, who is infinite and unlimited, condescends to interest Himself in the particular interests of a finite man, He must necessarily limit His activities and restrain His omnipotent power so as not to exceed the limited needs of the man.

With these general observations in mind we may be helped in clear thinking about the nature of Christ by an illustration.

Let us imagine a coal of the whitest, hottest fire, fresh from the sun, as it were,

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and which, like the sun, sends forth its consuming and conserving radiations without exhausting its own energy—somewhat as radium *seems* to do in this respect. Imagine this miniature sun coming into contact with a combustible mass. This combustible mass, however, is to be thought of as being composed of complex substances and of having various densities and rarities. The substances at the point of immediate contact with the coal of fire would yield by being consumed and expelled. Certain movements would thus be generated and we could think of the external combustible mass as being drawn gradually to the coal of fire, as by accretion, and thus *gradually* consumed or expelled. And we may think of a period of thirty-three years as being required for bringing the entirety of the combustible mass into immediate contact with the coal of fire where

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it is consumed or expelled. The movement or the order of procedure would be according to the nature of the things involved just as the ocean currents or any other movements of matter are according to the nature of the things involved.

Now, in the Person of Jesus Christ there was a dual personality, one part of which was as distinct from the other as the combustible mass was distinct from the living coal of fire in the illustration—and the two parts were also as organically related as the combustible mass and the coal of fire. The finite part of Jesus Christ, which was inherited from the virgin mother Mary, was a kind of composite of all that exists potentially in finite human life. All of the accumulations of hereditary tendencies to evil, from the beginning of the race to the time of the Incarnation, were stored up, as it were, or potential, in what the mother Mary

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contributed to the dual personality of Jesus Christ. This finite part of Jesus Christ, then, is represented in our illustration by the "combustible mass," and God Almighty Himself is represented by the "living coal."

By working out the particulars of this imperfect analogy, we will be assisted in thinking in definite terms of the *experiences* of Jesus Christ, and these experiences are, as said before, what the Bible treats of in treating of Him. The plane of consciousness in Jesus Christ was where the substances from "the combustible mass" (tendencies to evil) came into immediate contact with the "coal of fire" (Deity Itself). The various forms of activity in matter, molecular and any others, caused at this point of contact would be analogous to Christ's experiences. For instance, when iron should be closely approaching the "coal of fire," there to be consumed or expelled, the molec-

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ular activity would be different from that resulting when water should be closely approaching it. And so, when the inherent evil emotion of selfish friendship, for instance (which would sacrifice humanity for one friend), should be coming to the plane of consciousness in Jesus Christ, the experiences at that time would be different from the one at another time when selfish ambition or some other should be coming to the plane of consciousness. The variety and the complexities of the evil tendencies inherent or potential in a human life are so great that thirty-three years were required for them to pass the conscious plane of Jesus Christ and thereby be perfectly overcome or expelled from His Personality.

Activity, when predicated of the human mind, is feeling and thinking. Human feeling, of which quality is the most important characteristic, divides itself into

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happiness and suffering. Hence, the experiences of Jesus Christ not only exemplify the divine quality, but they also contained both happiness and suffering. Some passages in the Bible speak pointedly and plainly of Christ's sufferings and temptations. "Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights he was afterwards an hungered." (Matt. 4 : 1, 2.) At Gethsemane he exclaimed, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." (Matt. 26 : 38.) Again He prayed, "Oh, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt." (Matt. 26 : 39.) Upon the cross He exclaimed, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27 : 46.) These experiences of His, typical of many others, were some of the mental or spiritual *activities*

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at that point in His Personality where the infirm and finite qualities, inherited from the virgin mother Mary, came into immediate contact with the consuming element of divine Love Itself. The symbolical interpretations of Scripture show that the Lord's experiences of temptation began in earliest childhood, and were numerous enough to continue throughout His life in the world, because each inherited evil tendency or inclination could be expelled only by temptation-combat.

Let us take, for example, the descriptions and accounts of the battles and wars in the Old Testament. Some of these depict such cruelties and horrors as to seem revolting. When read symbolically, however, according to their inmost sense, they are found to be nothing other than revelations of certain temptations or spiritual battles in the personal and private life of Jesus

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Christ, by which His inherited evils were being eliminated and the salvation of the human race achieved. Again, the forty years' wandering of the children of Israel in the wilderness, alluded to in the preceding chapter, has an inmost symbolical sense which treats of nothing other than certain actual experiences in the life of Jesus Christ. Again, consider the biblical coincidence alluded to on page 104 of both Abram's and Christ's being led into Egypt, by curious circumstances, Abram's soon after his being called of Jehovah and given the promise of Canaan, and Christ's soon after he was born. The inmost symbolical interpretation of both of these accounts reveal the fact that Christ, in some of His earliest experiences in the flesh, met the temptations which are induced by sensuous or scientific knowledges of which Egypt is the symbol. "Till heaven and earth pass one jot or

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one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." (Matt. 5 : 18.)

Bear in mind that Christ's experiences were to Him phenomena, the same as ours are to us. His purposes and intentions were divine. His motives were those of Divinity. He was able to recognize the difference between the imperfect qualities arising from His inherited nature and the divine quality of His own inmost soul. Now, we, by the aid of our own experiences (phenomena), are enabled to acquire some trustworthy knowledge of the experiences of others; and it is in a similar way that we acquire knowledge of Christ's experiences *and something of their quality*. In so far as we learn of Christ's experiences and their quality we are guided by "the criterion of truth."\* and attracted by "the standard of all values."\*

\* Chap. III, Vol. I.

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In the light of all the foregoing observations the reader ought now to be able to answer for himself such a question as this, What happened in the private life of Christ, in the realm of His conscious feelings and thoughts, when some inherited evil tendency came to consciousness? To state the question more fully, When, owing to environmental conditions, some form of evil, pride, let us say, which Christ had inherited from the virgin mother Mary, was awakened or brought to the plane of consciousness, somewhat as pride is awakened in us by flattery, what occurred in the realm of Christ's feelings and thoughts? The answer is comparatively simple. The evil pride came into immediate contact with divine Love and was thereby eliminated, and, in such a way as to permit of the descent of divine Love into the faculty from which the pride emanated. In an ordinary man the

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experiences which would be analogous to these is that of pride's being transformed into a heavenly humility.

If we interpret now such an experience of Christ's in terms of happiness and suffering we must first observe that pride is a desire, a craving. When any human desire is gratified then happiness is experienced. When it is denied, gratification then suffering ensues. In the Personality of Christ no evil desire was ever permitted to receive any gratification. On the contrary, every selfish impulse or emotion was made to yield completely to divine Love. It is evident that the mental activity, occurring when a selfish craving was denied gratification and made to yield to the absolute rule of divine Love, was a temporary form of suffering. All of Christ's sufferings, some of which were deep and intense beyond our power of comprehension, consisted solely of those mental

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activities occasioned by the elimination of all that was imperfect in Him, and the substitution therefor of what was divine. His sufferings were never those of Divinity, but only those of the inherited imperfections of His finite nature by which the imperfect was made perfect. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life, in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal." (John 12 : 24, 25.) The incomprehensible *satisfactions* experienced by Christ, on the divine side of His nature, are sometimes overlooked. The divine Love in Him, which was gaining one victory after another for the salvation of the human race by these very mental activities by which the evil inclinations in the finite part of Christ were suffering their expulsion or death, was being per-

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fectly gratified, and the perfect gratification of divine Love is divine Happiness. The exclamation on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" came from the last remaining elements of imperfect finite humanity which were only then being made to yield themselves to the divine Love of the Father within Himself.

The simple statement now of a very important fact involved in the incarnation ought to be sufficient to make it manifest. Somewhat as God in Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem and thereby became personally present in the world, so God in Jesus Christ descended *into every faculty of the finite human mind*, in the sense of becoming personally present in each of these mental faculties. This planet is a finite object located in space and time. It is a realm. It has been shown that Human-nature is a realm as real and as extensive as material Nature. From

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whence arises pride? From whence arise the tendencies to murder, the inclinations to commit adultery, the impulses to bear false witness and the like? Do they not arise out of certain interior faculties of the mind which are realms in Human-nature? These faculties or spiritual realms all existed in Christ's assumed human nature. Christ's successive temptations, from His birth to His glorification, could be described as so many steps of a stairway on which God descended in becoming personally present in each of all of the faculties or realms of finite human life. It would be no more remarkable for God to be born in the realm of each finite mental faculty—that one, for example, from whence arises the inclination to murder—than to be born in the realm which we call this material planet or the earth. And when we consider that Divine Revelation shows the existence, in the

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spiritual universe, of hells as well as of heavens, and that all the evils in men of this world are inspired from hell, we can see that by God's descending, even into the lowest faculties of the mind, in the way that He did in Jesus Christ, His personal presence there would produce certain powerful effects upon those diabolical influences which affect human life here. Christ's sufferings, therefore, which were the processes by which divine Love descended even to the lowest hell (only potential in Human-nature, but real in the spiritual universe), were not endured simply for the purpose of setting a good example to men, but also for actually establishing certain spiritual order throughout the spiritual universe, by which the influences from that universe could never destroy the spiritual freedom of men in this world, by the proper exercise of which freedom every man may be saved from his sins.

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The experiences of Jesus Christ were those by which He was "*glorified.*" Christ's glorification does not mean that Christ, apart from God, became an angel, but rather that God, in Christ, Himself became personally present in the world and in every faculty and realm of Human-nature including every plane of the spiritual universe. His personal presence with us, when interpreted in terms of His divinely beneficent activities in behalf of every living soul, is called, in theology, the Lord's Divine Humanity.

One of the most practical and helpful of all the sublime facts which this theme brings out is that of the perfect analogy between the *glorification* of the Lord Jesus Christ and the spiritual *regeneration* of the individual souls of men. The mental activities or experiences in Christ, by which an evil inclination was eliminated and divine

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Love substituted, are precisely analogous to the spiritual activities or experiences in us by which a wicked tendency is so completely transformed as to become an unselfish love. Owing to this analogy between Christ's experiences and those of a regenerating man, the symbolical sense of the Scriptures, while treating of Christ's glorification, treats at the same time of man's regeneration. Thus it is that the revelations of Christ are the spiritual light by which our own souls are laid bare, and by which we may know the differences between selfish and unselfish qualities in the loves that rule in us, and the course to pursue in life by which we may go directly and perseveringly toward our "chief interest" as our goal.

## CHAPTER IX

### SOME CONCLUDING FACTS OF IMPORTANCE

WHEN a finite man presumes, in his egotism, to outline what he would say were he to write a book over the signature of God Almighty, and then finds that the contents of the Bible do not coincide with what he would make God to utter, he naturally denies its Divine Authorship. Many modern critics of the Bible are men of this kind. *A book laying claim to Divine Authorship must not be judged by any pre-conceived notions as to the truth it should set forth, or as to the manner by which the truth should be revealed, but rather by the evidence which the truth itself adduces in its own behalf.*

Between what God does and men do

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there is always and necessarily a striking contrast. If God has written a Book we should expect to find in it something clearly characteristic of God as distinguished from men. By noting the difference between God's creations and men's creations we find a striking illustration of something "characteristic" of God. For example, the objects of God's creations are such things as the sun, the planets, the forces and substances of Nature, whereas the objects of men's creation are only such microscopic things, relatively, as houses, ships, engines, trains of cars, clothing, some kinds of food and the like. The difference is indescribable between the material universe which God has created and the machinery and houses and other objects which men have created. Now, astounding as the statement may seem, it is nevertheless true that there is a difference between the Bible, God's Book, and all

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other books as fundamental and significant as between God's creations and the creations of men.

In literature the Bible is God's distinctive creation, whereas all other books are the distinctive creations of men.

The Bible gives expression to the distinctive thoughts of God Himself, whereas all other books give expression to the distinctive thoughts of finite men.

This being so, the magnitude of the Bible, *when considered as to its inner contents of truth*, must necessarily be as much greater than the magnitude of all other books combined as Nature is greater than the works of men.

Notwithstanding that there is this indescribable difference between the magnitude of the Bible and that of other books, yet most men, including many of those even who reverence the Bible devoutly,

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judge of the Bible's magnitude by a deceitfulness of appearance as misleading as that one which caused persons of a few centuries ago to believe that the sun, moon and stars could be piled up in their back yards, if only they could be attracted from the skies.

The inner contents of truth of the Bible being so extensive, it is foolish for us to expect to understand all that the Bible has to teach. When a man with a well trained mind reads a book treating of some familiar subject, and finds the writing so obscure as to baffle his understanding, he may be justified in giving a low estimate to the value of the book. There have been thousands of men of splendid mental discipline and culture who, in reading books in general, have fairly mastered their contents on the first reading, but who, in reading the Bible, have been baffled by its obscurity. Many of them have concluded, therefore, that the

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Bible is largely without value. They have made the fatal mistake of not inquiring into the cause of the Bible's obscurity. The cause of the obscurity is its incomprehensible depths of meaning. The Bible contains *infinitely* more than even the world's best scholars are capable of understanding. It is for each one to know, and then to bear in mind, even the egotist, that the area of his individual life here in this world represents not so much as one billionth of the area of Human-nature. The Bible, if it is what it claims to be, *God's Word*, is a revelation of all of God's relations to mankind. This would mean that it is a revelation of all that abides in the whole area of Human-nature. It is thus an exhaustless Fountain of spiritual information for any or all men for all time. *This being the case, when any man goes to the Word of God in search of spiritual truth he should not expect to find*

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*more of its contents, relatively, than the chemist or astronomer expects to find of the secrets of Nature when going to Nature.* Indeed, every Christian and spiritual student should approach the Bible somewhat as the scientist approaches Nature. He should realize that its content of truth is even more extensive than the facts of Nature (because Human-nature is more extensive than Nature), and that he is capable of receiving from it only the comparatively few knowledges of truth which his mind is at the time prepared to receive.

The two most conspicuous and significant of the innumerable things which God has done and is doing in this world have been, first, His approaching in very Person, in Jesus Christ, so near to mankind as Himself to walk, and talk, and fellowship with finite sinful men only as the Unlimited could do in a realm of limitations: and, secondly,

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His recording His own distinctive and Divine Thoughts in the finite language of men in the Book which we call the Bible.

Jesus Christ was God revealed or manifest in man's flesh, whereas the Bible is God revealed or manifest in human language.

There is precisely the same difference between the Bible and all other books as there is between Jesus Christ and all other men. The Bible, as a finite book, is as sacred and as holy as was the finite body of Jesus Christ and for the same reason. The literature of the Bible serves God as a medium between Himself and men just as the finite parts of Jesus Christ served Him as a medium between Himself and men. All that Christ inherited from the virgin mother Mary was finite: and in like manner all that the Bible takes on from man, such as the ink, paper, literary form, history, narrative and some other things, are finite. The finite

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things associated with both Jesus Christ and the Bible are to be thought of simply as vessels or receptacles especially created or prepared for the occupancy of the Divine Being Himself.

The relation, then, between the history, narrative, science and the like of the Bible, on the one hand, and the inner spiritual or symbolical truth, on the other, is the parallel of the relation between the bones, muscles, blood and the like of Christ's physical body, on the one hand, and the Divine Being who was using them as an instrumentality of approach to mankind, on the other.

That so-called "righteous indignation" which vents itself in crucifying tirades against the Bible, represents the same quality of motive that impelled the mob to crucify Christ. Christ's last prayer: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do," shows that a partially redeeming

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ignorance fortunately modifies the enormity of the spiritual crime of those ancient Jews and of these their spiritual offspring today.

Both God and men express themselves in many different ways. Men express themselves in smiles and frowns, in architecture and painting and sculpture, in engines and dynamos and telegraphy and social order. And, among the many other ways besides these, they express themselves in literature. God expresses Himself through the consciences of men and by prompting good impulses in the hearts of men. He expresses Himself voluminously in Nature and in the natural laws and forces and substances. He expresses His divine Humanity and the fact of His infinite Personality by His own incarnation in Jesus Christ. And, among the many other ways besides these, He expresses His Divine Truth in literature—in the Bible.

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*It turns out that the method selected by God in writing His Bible is as surprising to modern Christians as His method of becoming incarnate in Jesus Christ was to the Jews.* The Jews were expecting the coming of a great conqueror who would establish a temporal kingdom wherein there would be displayed far greater pomp, vain-glory and selfishness than was usually shown in worldly kingdoms. They thought that when the Messiah should come, the spectacular appearance of the event would be of such a character as to leave no trace of doubt in the mind of anyone as to who He was. And so it happens, and to the surprise of many, that the method selected by God in giving expression to His own distinctive thoughts in a book, was as humble and as inconspicuous as was His method of coming in the flesh. The external appearance of the literary form of God's Word presents

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no special glitter, and neither does it manifest any miraculous clearness. It sets forth no special signs or wonders by which men are compelled against their wills to acknowledge the fact that God has written a Book.

While the greater part of the Bible may be clothed in mystery, there are, however, some few passages from the surface of which Divinity beams as it beamed from the face of Christ. If we are spiritually receptive and responsive, that is, if we are spiritually resolved and thoroughly determined on living for righteousness, then our hearts respond to the manifest truths of these passages as the hearts of the loyal disciples melted before the expressive smile, or frown, or flash of fire from the eyes, of Jesus. But as there were many in that day who saw nothing exceptional in the face and eyes of Jesus, so there are those to-day who are blind

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to the most manifest truths revealed in the Scriptures.

The general attitude of Christendom toward the Bible has, in recent years, been greatly affected by the work of the so-called "higher" or "historical" critics. It is to be seriously questioned, however, if these critics have not contributed more to the spread of agnosticism than to rationality in religion. The scholarship of the critics is deserving of admiration and praise. Not so much can be said of the rational *methods* of their procedure. In so far as their scholarship has given to the world new facts and data they are to be given whole-hearted praise. But in so far as their rational conclusions are the fruit of poor logic they are themselves deserving of severe criticism. *Facts and conclusions are two very different things.* The students of these critics have not been making the proper discriminations

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between the facts presented by their teachers and the conclusions drawn from the facts. The most fundamental of their conclusions are shown to be entirely wrong by what the symbols of the Bible have to declare upon the subjects which they treat. Their first fatal error is their assumption that the Bible is a literary corpse rather than a living organism. In dissecting this literary corpse by "critical literary analysis," apparently not a suspicion ever crept across their minds that this *supposed* corpse contains a living soul. And this is not particularly strange, because in all the wonderful achievements of anatomy, not one single step has ever been taken toward discovering anything pertaining to the nature of the soul. The symbolical or internal sense of the Bible is to the literature of the Bible what a man's soul is to his body. We do not study the soul by anatomy, and neither *can* we study the

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spiritual revelations of the Bible by the "anatomical" methods of the higher critics. As Biblical anatomists the higher critics are performing a highly useful work. But inasmuch as *they limit themselves* to literary anatomy, they arrogate to themselves unwarranted and presumptuous privileges, when they conclude from their observations that the Bible does not contain *the Divine Truth*. Before they have a right to speak as regards the spiritual revelations contained in the Bible they will have to become something other than literary anatomists who deal exclusively in corpse-tissue.

In the introductory chapter to Volume I allusion was made to the deceitful appearances in Nature which are themselves the chief causes of both scientific and religious dogmas. It was there stated that the dogmas of the earth's flatness and of the sun's revolving around the earth originated

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in certain deceitful appearances. Inasmuch as Human-nature is as extensive and complex as Nature it is only natural to expect to meet with deceitful appearances also in Human-nature. Indeed universal experience proves the existence of deceitful appearances in Human-nature as well as in Nature. Now the chief reason why there must necessarily be some apparent contradictions and other kinds of deceitful appearances in the "letter" of the Word, some of which the higher critics have pointed out, is because the deceitful appearances in Human-nature are as numerous and as surprising as those in Nature. The critic of the future, who understands the symbolical character of the Bible, will deal with these unexpected appearances in the "letter" of the Word somewhat as the scientist deals with deceitful appearances in Nature. Strange as it may seem, the scientist, of all men, dares not

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be a literalist. He is compelled to look behind and deeply into the appearances of things. To be a literalist in science would be to be a fool. For illustration: The tree which one sees standing erect upon the shore of quiet waters is also seen in the water upside down. Here he is not allowed to believe his eyes, for they would declare a lie. Apparently there is here a contradiction. The eyes see that a tree is growing upside down in the water and the hands, when they feel for it, declare that there is no such tree. Which is he to believe? His eyes or his hands? This deceitful appearance, this apparent contradiction, becomes exceedingly useful because, by forcing the scientist to solve the problem it presents, it leads him to discover the important scientific fact of "reflection."

Again when the oar dips into the water it seems to curve at the point of contact

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with the water. The eyes declare that as soon as the straight oar dips into the water it becomes a crooked stick. But the hand, by feeling, shows that the oar remains as straight when in as when out of the water. Another deceitful appearance! Another apparent contradiction! By looking for the interior truth, however, behind this apparent lie in Nature a wonderful scientific fact is discovered, namely, "the refraction of the rays of light." This discovery could be called an "interior" scientific truth because it could never have been discovered, and cannot even now be seen to be true, except by using many external or surface facts in bringing it to light. It in turn, however, is but the instrumentality for learning of another scientific fact which is yet "interior" to it. For instance, it enables us to know that our eyes can see the setting sun for some time after it is actually below the

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horizon. That is to say, if a straight line were to proceed from the optic nerve of the eye to the sun during the last moments that it is visible before setting, or the first moments after rising, that line would penetrate a part of the earth's surface. The scientific literalist would say that this would involve one's seeing through miles of solid earth. Scientists could adduce thousands of illustrations of this kind and they could show that in nearly every instance the apparent contradiction in Nature or the deceitful appearance has led to the discovery of some hidden or partially hidden law or relationship or fact of great importance.

It is a fact that wherever, in the literal sense of Scripture, there are inaccuracies and apparent contradictions and the like, such as the higher critics show, and such as is plain to all who read the Bible with honest intent, these are there for the purpose of

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challenging the mind to investigate the interior truths which the symbolical interpretation of these texts would reveal.

In applying "the science of correspondences" as the key for unlocking the spiritual interpretations of Scripture, and in making the test by which the unique divinity of the Bible is demonstrated, it is found that some parts of the King James edition of the Bible will not "unlock," because they have no symbolical sense—the literary form of them is not such as to "cause symbols to declare the things which they have to declare." The authors of these parts were *therefore* only men (although spiritual seers, to be sure), whereas the Author of those parts which have the symbolical sense is God—as has been explained. Those parts which do not lend themselves to symbolical or correspondential interpretation and which, for that reason, cannot be

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considered so sacred as the rest, are the following books: Ruth, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, parts of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Songs of Solomon—of the Old Testament—and, of the New Testament, the books of Paul and all others except Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the book of Revelation.

For the complete proof of all the chief contentions of this book the reader is referred to the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, to which, it is hoped, this volume may serve as an introduction.

Immediately after the crucifixion of Christ the soldiers took His garments to divide among themselves. They found that His outer garments consisted of four parts, but that His coat, the inner garment, "was without seam, woven from the top throughout." They divided the four outer garments among themselves "to every soldier a part," but for His inner garment they cast

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lots, "*that the Scripture might be fulfilled which said, they parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots.*" The symbolical interpretation of this incident is as a declaration confirmatory of what has just been said respecting the difference between the literal and internal senses of the Scriptures. The external or literal sense of the Scriptures are represented by the four outer garments. The apparent contradictions and deceitful appearances and things of that character are involved in the fact that these outer garments were several in number and could be divided. But the internal or symbolical interpretations are "without seam, woven from the top throughout," which is to say that the Bible, when interpreted spiritually, is perfectly connected, and rational, and logical from the beginning to the end in the spiritual truths which it has to reveal.













